

Sxwuytn—Kaniksu Connections Trail Project comments

I wish to add the following to consideration of the Sxwuytn-Kaniksu Connections ‘Trail’ Project Environmental Assessment. At least one long standing Bald Eagle nest is present at Bead Lake. Analysis of the impact of increased human activity at Bead Lake is not considered in this report.

Regarding Environmental Assessment section 2.3 Design Elements in the Proposed Action, DE-20, Wildlife, Raptor Nesting Habitat-Bald Eagle, a longstanding bald eagle nest is present at Bead Lake near the tip of the peninsula between the southern and middle lobe of the lake. With the no timber harvest or burning in the area of the Mill Creek bald eagle nest, similar prohibitions are appropriate for the Bead Lake nest.

Regarding 2.3 Design Elements in the Proposed Action, DE-21, Wildlife, Raptor Nest Disturbance, avoiding project activities within 0.25 mile of active nests during nesting and fledging periods is appropriate for the bald eagle nest at Bead Lake noted above.

Regarding Environmental Assessment section 3.5 Recreation and the accompanying Recreation Report, I find no consideration or assessment of the environmental impact of increased recreation on the environment of Bead Lake or the surrounding Bead Lake basin. With the expected increase in human presence in the area with hiking, biking, OHV traffic, water craft presence, both motorized and non motorized, there will be influences on terrestrial and aquatic wildlife and plant life to be considered. Without this type of analysis, the Environmental Assessment is incomplete and flawed.

Not included in this Environmental Assessment is an analysis of the impact of increased human interaction at the Bead Lake boat launch facility with enlargement of the parking area as well as the addition of a dock. Currently, human:human conflict is a frequent occurrence with the current situation. Arguments and occasionally fights occur due to conflict at the launch facility. Use of the boat launch as a swimming facility frequently occurs creating an unsafe situation with children and swimmers in conflict with those launching boats.

An Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (IAVMP) exists for Bead Lake. Interaction between the Proposed Action and this plan is not documented, another flaw in the current Environmental Assessment. The Land Management Plan for the Colville Forest lists under Proposed Management Actions Table B-1,

Water Resources

Implement aquatic invasive species prevention measures at all developed recreation sites providing direct and/or indirect access to water bodies, such as boat ramps, campgrounds, and day use areas that provide portal zones for hand-carried watercraft. Implement aquatic invasive species prevention measures as part of all aquatic survey and inventory procedures and other management activities that pose high potential for invasion vectors to occur.

To this point, the Colville Forest has not participated in the Bead Lake IAVMP. Eurasian Milfoil has appeared in Bead Lake since the creation of the Bead Lake boat launch. The Washington Department of Ecology, the Pend Oreille County Weed Board, and the residents of Bead Lake have invested time and money to address the milfoil. It is time for the Colville Forest to participate in the milfoil eradication efforts at Bead Lake.

Invasive aquatic mussels are a threat to the waters of the Northwest, including in the area of the Sxwytn Project. While not yet present in the region, mussels are found as close as the Idaho panhandle. Including a “Clean, Drain, and Dry” program at the Bead Lake boat launch and including a pressurized washing station with runoff containment is a reasonable part of the plan. The presence of a host with the ability to enforce pressure washing the hulls of incoming boats is also reasonable.

Regarding Environmental Assessment section 3.5 Recreation and the accompanying Recreation Report, details of the dock construction, installation, and management are not addressed. The Pend Oreille County Regional Partnership Updated Shoreline Master Program, linked [here](#), along with WAC 173-26-221, linked [here](#), contain requirements for the construction of docks and the requirements for marinas. A full time host for the boat launch is a requirement for safe and efficient operation of this facility. In addition, assignment of responsibility for dock management is required, particularly for appropriate dock positioning with lake level fluctuations, prohibition of unintended uses such as picnicking, swimming, and loitering, and trash management.

Lastly, I encourage consideration of the safety of the increasing numbers of people using the Bead Lake area for recreation. I suggest including in the proposal a fire station in the Bead Lake area with emergency responders. The fire station should have adequate space for a staging area for future fire suppression activities in the region. This could function as a water craft washing station.